

Old Hickory

Winter, 1971

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Vol. 3, No. 2

REVIEW



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Editorial Committee

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comment

With this issue, two young members of the Jackson Writers Group join the Editorial Committee of the Old Hickory Review: Miss Delores Ballard, on the state news desk of the Jackson Sun, daily newspaper of Jackson, Tennessee, who also writes a daily poem for the paper under the heading "Musings", and Drew Brewer, a senior English major at Lambuth College, Jackson, editor of the college literary journal, "Coffee House Papers." Both of these young writers show great promise as poets. Samples of their work may be found in this and previous issues of the Old Hickory Review.

† † †

Shortly after the last issue of the Old Hickory Review was published, Dr. Stephen Mooney, poet-in-residence at University of Tennessee at Martin, died of a heart attack on May 12. With his passing also ended the brief existence of the Tennessee Poetry Journal which he founded and published at Martin. The loss to his university and to the state are two-fold—the loss of a distinguished poet and teacher and of the quality journal devoted to poetry which had attracted national and international attention.

A memorial scholarship fund in the study of poetry has been established at the university under the direction of Dr. Charles Mangum, head of the English Department and close friend of Dr. Mooney.

One of the high-lights of the Thirteenth Annual Mid-South Poetry Festival at Memphis in October was a memorial program in honor of Dr. Mooney. Presided over by Dr. Mangum was a panel of three poets, Dr. Frank Steele, who assisted in the founding of the Tennessee Poetry Journal and two students and protogees of Dr. Mooney, David Verble, poet-in-residence to the Metro School System of Nashville, and Thomas Johnson of Memphis. For three hours attending poets from the south and south-west were held spell-bound by their accounts of Steve Mooney and his poetry.

† † †

In the spring of '72, the Jackson Writers Group will join the other forty thousand citizens of Jackson in celebrating the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the city's founding. The Old Hickory Review will be published in a special sesquicentennial issue. The Writers Group is planning a number of special features and contests to be announced shortly.

† † †

The most interesting and exciting feature of editing a literary journal is the discovery of new and previously unknown talent. The Old Hickory Review presents with this issue three new men poets: Dr. John T. Stark of Jackson, geologist, world traveler and prolific poet, Charles Carmichael, instructor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and George Robert Michie of Jackson and New York, actor.

John T. Stark

AT SEVENTY

Allowance may be made at seventy
For man to ask himself if he is old.
Young men see visions, old men dream, we're told;
The Prophet's test of man's senility.
When zest no longer stirs with mystery
Of what's beyond the jungle's heat, and cold
Of mountain snows; when sunsets cease to hold
Excitements for sunrise—then may I be
Considered old.

Not yet, for Red Gods speak
To Age as clearly as to Youth, who heard
Their call and left security to seek
Adventure in paths patently absurd.
To old men all horizons are as one,
Young men see new horizons with each sun.

John T. Stark

BETWEEN THE TITANS

We are threading a devious web of streams,
Cautiously;
Between the twin Titans: Rio Para
and Rio Amazon.

From jungle shores long slivers of canoes,
In each alone
One tiny bit of nude, brown Indian
Humanity.

These small infant boatmen are river wise,
With fine technique
They paddle huge dugouts with adult skill;
Reminding me
Of seeing in the jungles of Ceylon
Transportation
Of infants that seemed most incongruous.

There I met on the road a naked youth
Scarcely more than three,
Seated on head of a huge elephant
Crossleggedly:
Neither beast nor youth had single shred
Of harness on.
Occasionally with a small reed he smote
To steer his steed
Efficiently as these young boatmen steer
Their boat.

John T. Stark

JUNGLES IN BRAZIL

As long as I can hear the calls birds make
In jungle depths and smell the jungle bloom,
And feel on cheek the gentle trade wind's breath,
And know on tongue exotic tastes, and bring
Awareness to the sense of sight—to see
Magnificence of jungle trees and streams
That widen inland to form jungle seas:

I will hold that present realities
More precious than forecasts of future dreams:
As long as such substance exists I'll be
Content with jungle beauty and to cling
To the illusion there can be no death:
Once beauty has been sensed, there is no tomb
Can seal its ecstasy, nor still its ache.

WARREN: HITCHHIKING TO A FRIEND

Moving east every day
With a different stranger
Cost me the momentum
Of my grief by speaking
Of it too often. Now, instead
Of you or sorrow, I see
Charts of cell counts
And I see white
And crimson Corpuscles
On the move, like me, toward you.
After Hitchhiking 2500 miles,
I'm glad you waited for me
Before you died. It was
The polite thing to do.
Odd, though, that after such a display
Of etiquette, you should call out
"Warren?" hear me say "Yes?"
But leave me waiting
For no reply. Perhaps I should
Have said "Yes!" without question,
Affirming something—your slipping
Into nothingness.
Leukemia, musical name
For a cancerous death
Fighting for the final sound.
What is the progress
Of the pageant since dawn,
Ah yes, blood-red against the
Malignant sky and stretching
(With the money from the priest.
Who paid my flight home)
Me into one long morning?

OF JULIE

You are gone back to the dance,
Girl with blond hair,
Blue-shadowed eyes
Like the turquoise
In the gold chain
Around your waist.
You wear a black sweater
Much too snug
And tight red pants.
Your bare feet
Moved slowly
On the cold, freshly-polished
Tile floor
All the while we talked.

To me, a stranger-friend,
You poured out soul thoughts
About a mother and a father
Together,
Yet apart.
You told about your death fears
And unending shots for allergies
Which blur your vision
And press upon your brain.
Child of misguided love,
You seek the near, constant companion
In whose persona
You can lose your self.

You are gone back to the dance.
Your name, your number,
And that faint smile
Which stirred me
From my musings
Remain behind.

George Robert Michie

JULIE RECONSIDERED

Tonight I saw you once again.
In tears you told me
Of the pill-pusher, acid taker
Who tuned you up,
Then pushed you
Further out
Into a world of loneliness.
Stephan was the one
Who blew your mind.
He filled the void
For two short weeks.
The war took him away.
You were more alone now
Seeking, searching,
Finally finding one
You hoped to trust.
And that's shot to hell!
So what's ahead?
Who knows?
Who cares?
There may be reason
For your tears.

Janette A. Gentry

I'LL BE JOLLY, BY GOLLY
(Even if it kills me!)

Well, once again "the season to be jolly" is almost here! It's also the season for wives to be wary AND the season for keeping one's mouth shut!

I have tried different approaches, through the years, to the problem of getting across to my husband what I wanted for Christmas. During the early years of marriage I always answered his queries on the subject with: "Oh, anything practical, dear, you know we need so and so, soooooo bad," and I wound up with just that. One year a stove, once a refrigerator, some seat covers for the car and even a floor-sander!

As the children came along, I would give them little hints, hoping they would pass these on. As a result of this, one year I received four long-stemmed candy dishes. I have made it a policy never to exchange a gift and I found it rather difficult to find a use for four candy dishes. Nevertheless, they were just the thing to use when my goldfish got sick and I had to separate them.

However, last year I decided that I would announce loud and long that I didn't want anything practical. No sir ree, what I wanted was something personal—something to fit my personality, something for me and me alone!

My husband fussed and fumed and it wasn't until Christmas Eve (about the time for the stores to be closing) that he left the house in a big hurry. I grinned to myself when he returned in an hour or so with a beautifully wrapped box under his arm.

On Christmas morning, when we all started unwrapping our gifts, he kept pushing the box at me.

"Open this one next," he urged.

I kept putting it aside.

"I want to save the best till last," I answered sweetly. So after everyone had looked at his gifts, I dramatically cleared a space and slowly unwrapped my gift. My husband's eyes were shining and there was a proud look on his face as I reached in and withdrew from the many layers of white tissue paper, a knee-length, hot-pink nylon negligee! White feathers, that resembled pure pigeon, adorned the neck and sleeves. Here and there, half-buried in the fuzz, rosettes of black sequins sparkled. I froze with my mouth wide open!

"Well?" my husband asked.

Recovering quickly, I held it up to me and in a quavery voice answered, "It's just what I've always dreamed about, dear. But you really shouldn't have done it; I bet it cost a mint!"

"Nope," he sounded smug, "got it on sale!"

And that's when I changed my policy. Two or three days after Christmas, I sneaked the thing out of the house and took it back to the store, where I was informed by a sympathetic but firm saleslady that it had been bought on sale and could not be exchanged.

Well, it was along about March when my husband remembered to ask me why I never wore that pretty "housecoat" he had given me.

"Oh," I said, "I like to save something nice; you never know when you'll get sick and have to go to the hospital."

And so, as "the season to be jolly" once more approaches, I'll be jolly even if it kills me . . . and also wary about what I say—except to let it be known that right now I could certainly use a new set of pots and pans!

Janette A. Gentry

ANNUAL VOW

Each year I make the same old vow
Mids't all the hurly-burly,
If this I live through,
Next year I'll do,
My Christmas shopping early!

Robert T. Parker

THE PASSING OF BRODIE HOWELL

The folks around the village of Bethpage still tell the story that Uncle Tommy Simpson told. He alone seemed to know what happened to Brodie Howell. And if he did, he carried the secret to his grave.

It was 4:15 and Uncle Tommy Simpson knew his daughter would fuss if he was late for supper. Yet, as he sat on a rotting sycamore log and fished in the muddy waters of Bledsoe Creek, he found it hard to end his fishing. Mud-cats were biting as fast as he baited a hook with wiggling red worms and dropped them in the water. He decided if he could add a few more fish to the long string anchored in the creek, he would suffer through a lecture.

Everyone in a radius of three counties knew Uncle Tommy, a frail little man in his late nineties, with white hair and a long white beard, weighing in the minus side of one hundred pounds. Today he wore a blue shirt and baggy pants, his shoes split over the toes favoring his corns and bunions. In Bethpage, near Nashville, people loved the familiar figure with his sharp bright eyes and friendly smile. Folks marveled at his ability to move about, to catch the most fish, to kill the most rabbits and squirrels.

Now he fished, catching one fish after another, and forgot the time. Suddenly, a loud rustling in the branches overhead caused him to look up. He couldn't believe what he saw: three huge, black vulture-like birds; the largest he had ever seen, with long bony wings, long claws that clung to the sycamore limbs, and large eyes that looked almost human, staring down at him. Then they rose and flew away, uttering eerie cries that sent chills up his spine.

He sat stunned and surprised by their sudden flight, and by the strange, weird birds disappearing towards Howard's Hill . . .

The story of the birds saved Uncle Tommy from the usual lecture about being late and having to eat cold food. The folks listened and asked questions, none of which he could answer. There had never been such birds anywhere that they knew of, in Tennessee anywhere or particularly at Bethpage along Bledsoe Creek!

Morning found Uncle Tommy sitting on a three-legged stool in front of the post office watching the folks who passed. The rural route carriers had gone in their horse-drawn buggies up the gravel roads to deliver the daily mail to the farmers.

In front of the white-fronted garage the usual group of loafers was sitting on the wooden bench. Two were playing checkers; conversation was about the big black birds Uncle Tommy had seen, about their size, their big eyes, where they had come from and why, to Bethpage. . . . The checker players moved their black and red pieces carefully, listening and wondering.

Tuesday was a typical day in the village. Local merchants opened their doors for the usual routine business. There wasn't much—mostly credit—on the books until burley tobacco was sold and farmers could pay up, and start another crop.

The sun was hot; it was always hot in July. There had been no rain for four weeks. The garage owner, the loafers, the checker players paid little attention to the mule-drawn wagon that stopped in front of the station . . .

When a loud voice asked directions of how to get to the old High Pocket Malone cabin, they all looked up. The inquirer was a huge fellow dressed in blue shirt and overalls with black hair and a week's stubbly black beard, 6 foot 3 inches or more, weighing 240 or 250 lbs., with huge hands holding the reins. They stared. They were amazed at the size of this stranger, but it was his eyes they noticed most: they were large, pale blue, almost white, and very sad; the saddest eyes they had ever seen. They couldn't help but notice a large copper ring shaped like a serpent, on a finger of his right hand.

Everyone knew directions to the High Pocket cabin, at the head of the hollow up through the old Chipman field. No one had lived in the little three-room cabin since the tall black man, his wife and seven children had moved to the big house overlooking Bledsoe Creek.

They gave him directions and watched him drive his mules through the lane up through the pasture lot and wondered who he was and why he had come to the village.

Weeks passed. The store keeper who sold him supplies of food told the people of the village the stranger's name was Brodie Howell. That was all he knew. Brodie came down once a week, for sugar, flour, lard and coffee; he didn't talk much, just bought and paid cash for items he needed, loaded them into the two-horse wagon and drove away up the lane. His visits to the village store once a week were routine and the checker players never stopped their play nor looked up as he passed. Hunters, looking for rabbits and quail, reported seeing him working in his tobacco field, plowing with his mule. Once, young Robertson, trying out a new rifle, came back into the village excitedly telling of seeing three huge black birds flying over Poke Hill, near Brodie Howell's cabin, and of a strange, unexplainable happening when he tried to shoot one: his rifle had failed to fire! After the birds disappeared, the rifle fired perfectly. No one could understand. They wondered about the huge stranger, with his sad blue eyes, about the large black birds and what it meant to the village.

It was Uncle Tommy Simpson who first asked the store keeper about Brodie Howell. When he failed to show up on Tuesday for his weekly supply of groceries and again on the following week-end and then after a three week period of not seeing or hearing from him, Uncle Tommy and three of the men who spent most of their time playing checkers and pitching horse-shoes de-

cided to go up the winding lane through the old Chipman farm to the little cabin. Perhaps the big man was sick, by himself, up in the hollow. They felt it their duty to find out.

It was hot, unusual for late October in Tennessee, and the four men, following the branch formed by the big spring near the little cabin, were hot and perspiring as they walked. . . . Wondering and commenting as to what they would find when they reached the cabin.

Suddenly, it came into view: a little unpainted house with a big chimney at the south end made of limestone rocks. It looked deserted. Horse weeds grew profusely in the front area; a picket fence, badly in need of repair, surrounded the yard. A small gate with one broken hinge, was open. They walked inside the yard. Uncle Tommy Simpson called aloud. There was no answer. The men stood in silence. They noticed the two mules eating grass in the orchard pound. The stranger couldn't have moved away. His crop of tobacco still stood in the field. He had to be in the house—sick, perhaps—or dead. Cautiously they followed the path up to the little cabin. The front door was partially open. A hungry hound dog wagged its tail and came close. Uncle Tommy Simpson pushed the door open and the four men walked in. A table in the kitchen was covered with a soiled oilcloth and on it a half-filled catsup bottle, slices of dry bread and a plate with some type of meat. They saw a wood stove with an iron tea kettle and a pot half-filled with something that could have been rabbit stew. They noticed dirty shirts and overalls hanging on the back of a cane bottom chair. In the back room they found an unmade bed, strewn with dirty clothing and on the floor a pair of muddy shoes. There was no trace of Brodie Howell. The four stood amazed. What could have happened to the huge mysterious stranger? . . .

The dry food on the table was several weeks old . . .

Slowly, they turned and walked out of the little cabin and closed the door. They searched the area around the house, the barn, the fields, the results were the same: no trace of Brodie Howell.

They stood at the gate; all except Uncle Tommy Simpson. A rustling noise at the north end of the house had caused him to turn. He stood amazed at what he saw—four large black birds perching atop the picket fence—large birds with long bony wings. It was then he noticed the bird nearest him. It's eyes were following his every move. The eyes were large, pale blue, almost white, almost human, and sad—the saddest eyes he had ever seen. Eyes that sent cold chills up his back; yet there was something else . . . something impossible . . . something he couldn't believe. On one claw of the scaly foot of the bird was a large copper ring . . . made in the shape of a serpent.

FOR CPL. B. P. BALLARD, 1912-1970

War, you have long arms.
Arms
That can span seas and years.
The North African Invasion,
1943.
Bombs, and shrapnel.
A quiet cemetery
On a cold first day of November, 1970.
Final rites.
Cause of death: "Complications
From a war wound."
Peace. March for it. Burn for it.
Cry for it. Pray for it.
Big deal.
What matter peace now,
If a 30-year-old war
can still kill?

Delores Ballard

THUS SPAKE THE NATURE POET
TO THE CONTEMPORARY CRITIC—

don't I ever get tired
of falling leaves
and birds and butterflies:
don't rainbows
begin to sound
a little corny?
Sing instead of truth and
infinity,
and the Sweet Mystery of Life
in words that sound
rancy as hell
and are twisted and turned and tangled
on one another
like a skein of knitting yarn
full of kittens?
not for me.
I don't like guessing games,
and I don't claim to be a genius.
I can't define absolute truth,
but I know what a butterfly is.
what if infinity
goes out of style
with next year's poets?
I'm all right—
because all those birds and corny rainbows
will still be around.

Lois Broady

THE PROMISE

And God said to Noah, "All will be well."
Then a rainbow in the sky appeared in promise.
How many times have I
In flood of anguish
Looked up to see that colored band
And found the promise was not vain.

Drew Brewer

BUDDHA AND THE FALLEN ANGEL

(To Larry Etie,
poet-in-residence, the planet Earth)

i have seen you end
lives other than your own
using only an ink-sword
and a shield of paper

from you i have learned:
the freshness of failure
the absurdity of pain
the rhythm of death
the holiness of dreams

it is your dreams
which interest me most
(jesus, women, rain, mirrors)
the shrillness of your laugh
raping what silence dare exist
around your particular nightmare

i have seen you end lives
other than your own
and this has made us brothers

as courage and insanity are brothers
as fear and eternity

Mark Burns

POINT COMFORT

From the Norfolk bridge,
Between sea and fire sky,
We watched sunset ships resting in the harbor
Of evening's city.

Mark Burns

WINTER STUDY

In snow,
Beneath a frost moon,
The iceflake maiden stands—
Preserved,
Rigid,
Frozen.

CATULLI VERONENSIS LIBER NO. 101

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus
Aduenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
Ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
Et mutam nequiquam adloquerer cinerem,
Quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum,
Heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi.
Nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
Tradita sont tristi munere ad inferias,
Accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu
Atque in perpetuum, frater, aue atque uale.

Free Translation by Sarah Clement

Borne through many peoples and many waters I have come to these melancholy shores, brother, that I may give to you the last offering to the dead and uselessly I am speaking to your silent ashes.

Since fate has separated us we have been cut off, unhappy brother, from companionship. Nevertheless for a season after the manner of the ancients, these sad gifts are brought as funeral offerings.

Receive these bestowed with fraternal tears, and forever, dear brother, hail and farewell.

Sarah V. Clement

CONVENTUAL

Slow pass the days. The quiet hours bring
No change except the season's changing light,
Darkness and dawn, the waning and the bright
New sickle of the moon. Clear voices ring
The endless canticles of praise and prayer,
Praise for the endless peace God's love has sent,
Prayer lest the touch of disillusionment
Shatter this life, so crystal pure and fair.

O restless heart, this quiet must be best!
Did you not try the world and find it pain?
Did you not shrink from all its empty care,
From futile questionings and all your share
Of misery endured—endured in vain?
O restless heart, here you must find your rest.

Sarah V. Clement

HAIKU—

PEACE

the bough hangs green against
the sky,
There is deep peace.
Why not peace with men?

IL SE PEUT

MAYBE

Il se peut qu'un rêve étrange
Vous ait occupée ce soir,
Vous avez cru voir un ange
Et c'était votre miroir.

Perhaps a strange dream holds you
This evening as the hours pass,
An angel seems within your view—
But it is your looking glass!

Pierre Reverdy

SON DE CLOCHE

Tout s'éteint
Le vent passe en chantant
Et les arbres frissonnent
Les animaux sont morts Il n'y plus personne
Regarde
Les étoiles ont cessé de briller
La terre ne tourne plus
Une tête s'est inclinée
Les cheveux balayant la nuit
Le dernier clocher resté debout
Sonne minuit

Translation by Katharine Clement

THE CLOCK STRIKES

All is dark
The wind passes singing
And the trees shiver
The animals are dead There is no longer anyone
Look
The stars have ceased to shine
The earth no longer turns
A head is bowed
The hair sweeping the night
The last clock left standing
Strikes midnight

E. T. Lackie

COON CREEK FOSSILS

They speak to me
Those little beings
Buried there a million years . . .
Of oceans,
Emptied long ago,
Perhaps as was my bath tub
Last night.

E. T. Lackie

WILD AUTUMN

Wild autumn brought her paint brush out
And touched the tree tops here and there.
Tomorrow she will try again
And scatter color everywhere.

The reds and yellows, browns and gold
that trim earth's forest, field and glen
Only God could paint such beauty,
Only God not mortal men.

The greens of pine with cones held high
The waving yellow goldenrod,
The purple aster, shocks of corn,
All have the magic touch of God.

I know not why God gave to man
The privilege of living here.
I only marvel at the gift
And grow more humble year by year.

THE DESERT

The hollow eye of the vulture
Glares out of its naked head,
Viewing naked terrain.

Onyx wings spread forth
As the ashen sky
Beckons.
Rising, our midnight clipper floats
Into the false sunset,

Over the sagey saguaro, looms the desert
Like an old man his arms folded in disgust.
For he's been here an immovable eternity;
He's been here among rocks
That lived, that died, that preserved.
He's been under mountains
Slowly eroding, but still standing
And any stranger who passes his way
Will not show him reason to move.

The desert cries,
Oh Aquarius! Bear me water!
And the rocks, the mountains,
The vultures, the saguaro
Will have flowers, colors, and
Running brooks—

And the desert will die into new life.

S. D. Moore

THE OLE GRAY JACK

There was an old gray Jack
Whose feet were so long his toes turned up
He looked like an old Greek minotaur
But, oh, when his trombone horn came up
As he walked around on velvet carpets of powdered manure
The bird orchestras listened.
The bumblebees quit their clarinets in the poplar logs
Mr. Jersey-Man stopped the gyrations on the bull-fiddle.

When that ole gray Jack
Began to make music with his trombone horn,
He was the jazz king of all the barn of Jacks
Because he carried a golden horn.
The bird orchestras listened.
The bumblebees quit their clarinets in the poplar logs.
Mr. Jersey-Man stopped the gyrations on the bull-fiddle
When the ole gray Jack made music in the barn of logs.

He could beat many a society woman a-squallin'
Because he was a-callin'
To his Jennie in the pasture,
And he held the conjecture
Of the mastery of music with the horn.
The bird orchestras listened.
The bumblebees quit their clarinets in the poplar logs.
Mr. Jersey-Man stopped the gyrations on the bull-fiddle
When the old gray Jack made music in the barn of logs.

THE REGATTA

Freed from their moorings,
White sails hoisted, poised and
Silently—

Nesting on a cobalt sea
That mirrors depth of blue sky,
Waiting—

Not alone for sound of starting guns,
But also for fickle winds
Blowing—

To fill the spinnaker,
To forge ahead of other boats,
Snaring—

The evasive, changing breeze
Within the sails
Using—

The power to bring the
Craft to the coveted goal,
Smoothly—

Now they move gracefully along,
Sails taut, power filled,
Enchantingly—

Each boat moves with the grace
And charm of a dancer,
Gliding—

With curved sails billowing
In a ballet of movement,
Eventually—

Not by chance, but by design of boat
And skill of crew, the race is won,
Finally—

Kathryn Robbins

THE GREEN OF WARM
(In The Cherokee Valley)

Two reds—two whites
three blues—and a brown.
Stringing beads, she waits for
tourists to come
down
the mountain.

Forgetting . . .
bleached bones of ancestors
strewn along the trail;
hardships hammered down with the big land dole,
contentment lights her face. She has
Big Chief to love and he, a little
taller grows each year. Her children's
children romp the meadow, armed around
with warm embrace of rocky ledges. Wild
flowers edge the valley sipping color
from the morning sun.

Two reds—two whites
three blues—and a brown.
Stringing happiness on the green of warm,
she watches hurried people come and go with
boughten trinkets
beads
and baskets.

Kathryn Robbins

HAIKU
MOON-MURMUR

What is man that he
Tracks my secret peace, leaving
Me a still-borne flag?

PHILOSOPHY OF A COCK-ROACH

Archie, the cock-roach
Since becoming a hippie,
Writes long-haired haiku.

This sly night raider
Knows the secrets and scandals
Of the neighborhood.

A bagful of fleas
Is much easier to hold
Than a wife, too young.

Toads dream all winter
Of delectable insects
Tickling their tongues.

The pent-up passion
Of a mocking bird's love song,
Leaves a toad—a toad.

Sweet morsels—crumbs from
A love feast, are too often
Swept under the rug.

Deep philosophy
Has a shady outlet, for
Minds in the gutter.

Two idiots who
Ran in circles, reached home long
Before their guru.

Spider webs quiver—
Ginkgo fans go flutter—GOSH,
MY MOTHER-IN-LAW!

Eddie Lee Anthony Smith

MAGIC OF HAIKU

One moment of glory,
Wing-feathered and singing,
Out-weighs many years.

The Hand that creates
Loveliness of Luna moth
Proves itself divine.

The care that hovers
Over helpless things, too light
To bend the grass.

Lighter and whiter
Than breast feathers of wild geese
Snow flakes drifting down.

Things crushed and cast off
Inadvertently, often
Hold all the answers.

Plum blossoms—then cherry,
How can one heart hold all the
Abundance of Spring . . .

May bloom—Autumn fruit—
No need of more miracles
But time to ripen.

A mountain peak holds
The fiercest sunset at bay
Until day is done.

A silk worm finding
A destiny suiting her taste
Reaches Nirvana.

Charles T. Stanfill

AT YOUR HOUSE

The measured tones of Bach
Marched up and down
The silver ranks of pipes
And breathed deeply
Among the greater bass
Filling the atrium of your house
With chest swelling sound:
The summer rainstorm was not
In tempo, shattering on the skylight
A drumfire without rhythm,
Its own harsh bass rumbling
Off into the bending forest.
Two serenades in my honor
And I thank you, friend,
Both a superb marriage
Of master, musician,
Organ builder, architect.

Ruby Jourdan Hillix

BLACK LACE

The dancing moon spins a web of fairy gold
and holds the world in a weird enchantment.
The shorn and empty branches of the trees
toss and twist in the cold night wind,
casting shadows of intricate design
on the snow covered hills and valleys below.

Shadows of black lace
edging the dainty robe of ermine
lying softly over the bosom
of Mother Earth
during the long and frigid night.

Robert Stepp

THE FORM OF THE FOURTH

(Daniel 3—25)

Although the furnace be seven times heated
The Form Of The Fourth is never defeated.

Snow clouds may gather and seem out of season
And your affliction may seem out of reason

But sure as the Form gave relief to the three
His multiplied peace is promised you and me.

May The Form Of The Fourth show you the way,
May you have no hurt too great for the day.

Juanita Sikes Young

MA'S BONNET

Faded in the crown,
The creases of
Its blue ruffles,
Reveal how blue
It really was.

It hangs on a rusty nail
Just over the empty churn,
Useless as the churn-dash.
Ma doesn't need it now,
Summer is gone
And the milking's done.

THE GIFT

Wesley Granger was the undisputed champion troublemaker of Shiloh County. He was so bad that the schoolteachers were afraid of him, and it was rumored that every term his assignment to a class incited near panic among the prospective faculty.

Just to look at him, you wouldn't think he was so bad. He had hair the color of dry straw and brown eyes as big as walnuts, but he always had a look about him like he was up to something. He had acquired for himself such a reputation for a ten-year-old that nobody was ever surprised at *anything* he did. Wesley's principal, Mr. Hargrove, said every time he saw Wesley he was reminded of an accident going someplace to happen.

Wesley's widowed mother Maggie did manage to make Wes go to Sunday School, although most of the time he delighted in making a late entrance and disrupting the class, and people surmised he went peaceably because he had time to think up a lot of meanness while he sat through the preaching.

The Sunday morning Wes got the idea, he overheard two of the deacons discussing Reverend Pigue, the new pastor. Reverend Pigue had been transferred from Warren County and was beginning his ministry that day.

"He's a fine Christian man, Wilson, a fine man," Deacon Shaw commented, "but, you know, he's a little peculiar. Afraid of frogs—scared to death of the little critters, matter of fact. Why, when we were driving him over from the county seat, one hopped up onto the buggy and the man might' near had a seizure before I could knock it off."

Deacon Wilson coughed and replied, "Well, now, Shaw, I don't reckon that'll make the man less a Christian, do you?"

"I reckon not. But he's liable to have a time keepin' away from frogs around here. These bottoms are full of 'em. Why, you know, Wilson, he nearly *passed out* three, four times before I could get him to the parsonage."

So the new preacher was afraid of frogs. What an opportunity!

† † †

There were three weeks of vacation left before school started, so Wesley figured he had plenty of time to think of some means of seeing Reverend Pigue's horror of frogs in action. Whoever heard of a grown man, a preacher especially, being scared of a harmless thing like a frog! This was a most challenging project for him to work on.

At Sunday School the following week, Wesley's teacher, Miss Mullins, provided the opportunity he needed. She announced to the class that the church members had voted to donate money to buy the new preacher a gift, which would be presented to him after morning worship the next Sunday.

"Now, class," she said, "since our group has the best attendance record for this year, one of you will be selected to present the gift to Reverend Pigue. Our class will offer a short program prior to the presentation, so everyone please meet in the chapel Saturday afternoon at three P. M. to practice. We will now draw a name to see who the lucky boy or girl will be."

"Please, not me," Wesley thought, and crossed his fingers.

"Miss Melinda Shaw, your name has been chosen."

"Hot Dog!" Wesley thought. "Deacon Shaw's daughter! That ought to be good. He'd fix the preacher and old freckle-faced Melinda at the same time.

As Reverend Pigue preached his morning sermon, Wesley planned how he could go about it. He would have to make the switch sometime Sunday morning between Sunday School and the program. Or maybe he could get up early and do it before anybody got to church. He would have to find the biggest, ugliest frog in the whole county. He'd find out where the gift would be and how he could sneak in and swap the frog for the gift without being seen. He thought out every detail and by the time the congregation stood to sing "Blest Be The Tie" he had his plans almost completed. He chuckled to himself when he imagined what would happen when Melinda handed Reverend Pigue the box and a big, warty bullfrog jumped out on him. He could hardly wait!

He thought about it all week and when Saturday afternoon came, he was the first one at rehearsal. Now, for Wesley Granger to be the first one anywhere where something worthwhile was happening, was a rare and surprising thing. But he was there at three sharp and ready to practice. He stood up and sang "We Welcome You" with the class exactly as if he were enjoying himself. He listened to Sammy Hunter quote from the 100th Psalm and Mary Jane Allen make a short welcome speech. Then came the part he was waiting for.

"Now, Melinda," Miss Mullins directed, "here is Reverend Pigue's gift." She reached into the small compartment behind the pulpit and removed a square box covered with tissue paper. "You are to walk from your seat to the front, pick up the gift, and present it to Reverend Pigue—the gift will be here on the front pew—and I think it might be nice if you helped him unwrap it, don't you?"

Melinda grinned, revealing a wide gap between two upper teeth and lisped "Yeth, M'am."

When rehearsal ended, Wesley didn't even stop to chuck a rock at the street lamp; he went directly home, ate his supper, and went to bed. Maggie felt sure he was coming down with something, for when Wesley was quiet, polite, and cooperative, he was usually in need of medical attention. Maggie peeped into his room before retiring and whispered, "Wesley?"

"Yes'm," he answered.

"Are you feeling well, Wesley? Is anything wrong?"

"No M'am. I'm just thinkin'. 'Night, Ma."

When Maggie got up next morning, she found Wesley all dressed and ready to go. Now she knew he was ill.

"Wesley! It's only nine o'clock!"

Wesley grinned and slipped the potato sack behind his back. "Yes'm, I know, but I have something to do down at the church this morning. Our class has a program, you know, and I gotta get on down there."

"But, Wes, your breakfast . . ."

"Bye, Ma!" and out the door he bolted.

Once he got to the creek bank, it took only a few minutes to find the right frog. It was perched just next to the edge of the water, almost concealed by dead leaves. Wesley, having had considerable experience at this sort of thing, caught it in the sack on his first attempt. Oh boy, he thought, what luck! This was the biggest, ugliest, fattest bullfrog he ever saw.

Wesley ran all the way to church. The door was open and nobody but old Thomas, the janitor, was around. Wes went directly to his classroom where the gift was being kept until time for the program. Carefully he removed the lid and lifted the hand-carved mantle clock from the box. He very gently transported the clock from the table to the closet floor and closed the door, then he took the frog from the potato sack and laid him in the box. The frog croaked a protest.

"Holler now, you wart factory, but don't do it during the program or I'll poke your eyeballs out!"

Wes realized that the box would not be heavy enough now, so he replaced the box top to keep the frog from escaping and went outside to find a rock. After a short search he found one the right size and the switch was completed. He adjusted the tissue paper and dusted off the box to make sure nobody would notice it had been tampered with. He could hear others arriving now, so he hastily threw the potato sack in the wastebasket and went outside to mingle.

"Mornin' Miss Mullins. Pretty day, ain't it?"

"Good morning, Wesley. My, you look nice this morning. You're here early, aren't you? You must be excited about our little program".

Wesley grinned and with a mischievous twinkle in his walnut eyes replied, "That I am. Yes'm, that I am."

He walked with the teacher to the classroom where two or three children were already seated. Wesley took a chair near the table and fixed his eyes on the box. He prayed that the frog would stay quiet. Maybe he should have put a few bugs in with it, so if it got hungry it wouldn't croak. Oh, well, even if it died the effect on Reverend Pigue would probably be the same.

Other children were coming in now, and it was almost time to begin. Where was Melinda Shaw?

At precisely nine-forty-five, Miss Mullins called the class to order and proceeded with the lesson, which she shortened to allow time for the class to assemble in the chapel before the rest of the congregation were seated.

"Now, boys and girls, we will march quietly and reverently to the chapel and take our places. Melinda, you . . . where is Melinda?"

Someone answered, "She ain't here, teacher."

"Not here?!"

"No, M'am. Her pa said she was home in bed with the measles. I don't reckon she'll be here."

Miss Mullins sighed. "Well, that is a shame. I suppose we'd better appoint someone else to present the gift to the Reverend."

"Oh, nuts!" Wesley thought. He was so looking forward to seeing Melinda jump and scream and faint. Might know she'd go and get sick just to mess up his plans. He was so busy thinking of something to do to get even with her that Miss Mullins had to call his name twice before he heard her.

"Wesley Granger!"

"Yes'm!" he jumped.

"Wesley, since you were the first one here this morning, I believe we will let you have the honor of presenting Reverend Pigue's gift."

Wesley turned pale. "But, Miss Mullins . . . I . . . but Miss Mullins," he protested, but he knew he was caught. "You have taken such an interest in our program, Wesley, I think it only fair that you take Melinda's place."

Wesley tried to think of a fast way to escape, but Miss Mullins was between him and the door. He felt as though he was going to be sick.

Miss Mullins was lining them up now. It was too late to make another switch with the gift—Miss Mullins was holding the box. Wes was the last one in line and Miss Mullins was right behind him. He wanted to run as hard as he could in the other direction. He wished he could slip down and break his arm so they'd have to stop everything and rush him to the doctor. He even hoped the church would catch on fire—or anything to get him out of this awful predicament.

The little procession was in the chapel now, and Miss Mullins steered Wesley into Melinda's vacant place. He hated Melinda's guts.

Wes glanced around and saw his mother smiling at him from a side pew. Oh, he had really done it this time. The tables had been turned and for the first time since he'd been in the world, he knew how it felt to be scared. As Reverend Pigue delivered his brief message, he prayed for a cyclone. If there was only something he could do—some way he could undo what he had done. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the perspiration from his upper lip.

Through the nauseating dizziness inside his head, Wes could hear the class singing the welcome song and realized the program was in progress. He moved

his lips, but nothing came out. Miss Mullins leaned over and whispered, "Wesley, what's the matter? You're not participating. Are you ill?"

"Yes'm," he whispered back.

"Nonsense!" she reassured. "There's no reason to be nervous. Just relax!"

Somehow he lived through Sammy's Psalm and Mary Jane's speech, but he wanted to drop dead just before his turn. The time had come, and he realized Miss Mullins was nudging him.

"Go on, Wesley!" she prompted.

He knew everybody could see his hands shaking as he reluctantly lifted the gift box from the front pew and started what he felt would be his last walk to the front of the room. He vaguely remembered that he was supposed to say something, but he stood there dumb, still hoping the building might crumble any second.

Reverend Pigue, in a voice so loud that it startled him, said, "You may open it for me, Master Granger."

Wesley froze. Maybe if he just fell down and acted like a dead boy . . .

"I said, you may open the box, Wesley," Reverend Pigue repeated.

Might as well get it over with, sooner the better. He'd be dead in a few minutes anyway, because his Ma would kill him. He shifted the weight of the box to his left hand, gritted his teeth, squeezed his eyes shut tight and lifted the lid off the box. Well, any minute now, he thought.

"How charming!" the preacher exclaimed.

"How what?!" thought Wesley. He didn't care to open his eyes.

"What a lovely gift. This will be a great help to me and I shall cherish it always."

With this remark, Wesley opened one eye and looked inside the box to see the delicately carved wooden clock nestled inside the tissue paper. It was a full minute before Wesley realized that his mouth was open.

"Thank you, Master Granger," the preacher was saying, "and thank you, dear friends."

Wesley was dumbfounded. How did that clock get back in there? And where was the frog? Who could have known? Well, whoever did it, he owed his life to him.

As the crowd was beginning to thin, Wesley turned and walked toward the Sunday School room to attempt to solve the mystery. Miss Mullins met him at the door holding the empty potato sack in her hand.

"I believe this belongs to you, Wesley," she said softly.

Wesley felt himself turning pale again. "Uh . . . I . . . yes'm." He took the sack, turned and started outside. When he was a few steps from the door, he stopped and without turning asked, "Uh, Miss Mullins . . . how did you know?"

"I didn't, Wesley, until after the program. Old Thomas called me aside

after the presentation and brought me here. He had seen you here early this morning, and he said he knew when Wesley Granger was the first one to Sunday School, something was wrong. He came in after you left and found the sack in the wastebasket. He heard a thump inside the gift box, so he investigated and discovered what you had done. He found the clock in the closet and put it back in the box."

Wesley turned around and wiped a tear with his coat sleeve. "Are you gonna tell my Ma?"

Miss Mullins walked over and put an arm around Wesley's shoulder. "You know, Wesley, sometimes our own deeds punish us sufficiently that no one has to do it for us, don't you agree?"

"Yes'm," he said.

And Wesley Granger ran to the creek bank and threw up.

WET STREETS OF THE NOW CITY

The wet streets of the Now-City
Full of reflections of the damp ghosts
Rising from the hard ground . . .
 Where all our past lies buried . . .

The long history of man,
The long history of the land.

We know only what we cannot
Forget. Who knows what the earth
Cannot forget?

The wet streets of this October-City
Blooming with the umbrellas of
Its men and women . . .

The Now-flowers of this River-bluff
Where once sedge grass and those
Purple asters were October's flowers.

Sumac on riverfront lots, island land
Surviving, but ways of forgotten men
Remembered only by their artifacts . . .

Those cruel stone barbs of the ancient
Hunter, ghosts only, nebulous echoes
On wet streets, echoes of forgotten men.

And forgotten game: the ancient hunted
And the ancient hunter, both nebulous echoes
On the wet streets of the Now City.

Eve Braden

THE MYSTERY

They all swam out to the lighthouse,
and
some came in boats. I saw their
voiceless eyes and heard the waves
chanting
“go back!”
It
was
no
use.
I ran to the tower looking out on the horizon . . . the sea
had eaten the sun and offered me a golden
path . . . moon made.
I heard the clang of their feet on the steel spiral steps—
one
had sea weed in his hair and salt on his
lips.
I wasn't enough to hate so they broke my beautiful shells.
Some say I lie on the sea's white floor, a frightened
look on my face . . .
Others tell I fled
on the golden path
laughing . . .

Enid Chalkhill

HOKKUS

trying to concoct
roast turkey without birds
is impracticable—
epicurean
diet—as trying to write
poems without words.

TURNING BACKWARDS

December's roses cough and click
In the wind, denuded thorn by thorn;
Dust-soft, pink petals scatter, quick—
Back to the dust from which they were born.
Whenever the wild south wind may blow
Strong enough to bend
The river backwards—who will know
What they may portend?
Whoever may try to learn
To outguess time and place,
May see the clock slowly turn
Away its second face.

Enid Chalkhill

IN EUROPE TOO

eel-like kaffians writhe
in and out
through iron palings.
what do they ever hope
to subjugate?
substituting their will—
performing feats
of irony—
for sense, however common;
with all their panoply
of easily-predictable
distortions, sensation—
slanted as usual—with
or without magnanimity—
they patrol
lest any nuance of thought
or hesitant feelings
escape their vigilantes.

THE COLLECTOR

The mystery of the narrow country road
Winding September road leading somewhere, nowhere
beckons him.
Its shadowy fingers bend invitingly.
A spot of sunlight melts warm against his shoulder.
And so he follows, aching a bit, perhaps
But he must go—must see beyond—slow, one foot
dragging
Oak cane tapping around the red-rock curve
Where he discovers a river of daisies, flowing yellow
between framing hills
The whole painted with divine skill, a private showing
just over the hedge row
An original for his memory collection.
He rolls the image inside, drowning in yellows and greens.
The best he can do. Enough. Age has spared a certain
youngness in him
And he knows quiet joy. The highway and his car wait in
the past.
Later he will remember them.

A READING AT BOLIVAR

I read for you
sister
accelerating sound
over institutional
bumpers
a retread of years
igniting metronomes
1 2 3
and
4 5 6
is anyone
praising roadmaps
I read
and from
some distant
custodial cocoon
I feel your smile
sister

Charles Reber

TO K. L. B.

I know a river man;
The river is in his blood.
The mystique of shifting
sand is a known thing.
He has no need to own.
Rocks, driftwood, people he
moulds into beauty.
Like the river his identity is
known, his presence felt.
Like the river, he gives and
in giving, possesses.

Kaye Rutter

ALREADY LIBERATED

The pleasant young man,
Tall, lithe-looking, lean,
Hair shoulder-length—
It was clean—
Half hesitated at the door
Of a store
We both were
About to enter.
Then he opened the door
For me.
Perhaps he could see
I already felt liberated
And didn't care
For any more.

Pat Murphy Reber

THRENODY FOR DORIS

There is a bush in my backyard that will not wait
for spring. So full of flowering, it sings
in shell pink petals of its joy whenever a warm day
brings a hint of hope that winter has passed by.
Three times it has denied the season. And all three
times, the snow returned asserting its dominion.

I don't know what to do to save you from yourself,
improvident young bush. I have only words
you will not understand.

I knew a young girl once, as beautiful as you,
as full of juice and as importunate.
The words I flung to her fell like ice between us.
But she was burning, burning, and hid herself
within a haze of smoke that slowly slipped away
while I watched, not knowing what to do
then, either.

ANOTHER PLACE

If you would let me love you . . .
I could remember you
when you were mine
and all the songs of life
fell down around us
like golden strands of sun
across our fevered brows.
You would come to me from nowhere
across the gentle paths of rain
engulfing me with joy
and I would kiss away
the teardrops from your eyes.
If you would let me love you . . .
you could become a memory
of winds that push against my life
to lift my heart to higher ground.
I could remember you
when we grew closely together
like green leaves entwined upon
some summer bough that last
at least a season's length.
If you would let me love you . . .
you could be my mind-expanding drug
causing me to break beyond
the fragile fringes of myself.
You could be my aphrodisiac
my marijuana, juniper leaves
my intoxicating wine.
If you would let me love you . . .
you could take me outside myself
to span all time and space
until I found my way inside your soul
and became one with you!

Greg Thibadoux

THE ELEMENTARY BEALE STREET BLUES

It's just a matter of different elements
he said,
raising up
unwrinkling his muscles
mixing to safety and shadow
his tin voice scattering down Beale
in cups of fury fit,
You might even say its elementary
he grinned
his last words and the setting sun
telling the concrete and my bottom
we were fast losing our own.

Greg Thibadoux

I CAN SMELL THE DISTANCE

I can smell the distance
he said, between us and you
and them and them
and you and them
his dead eyes
fighting his lids,
and they say you can't
see the stars for the lights
he laughed
soiling up chunks of air
with his beard
and that won't begin to close the gaps
he screamed
through the rattle of tin and silver.

FOUND OBJECTS, THE WRITER DISCOVERED TRYING
TO WHITMANIZE HIMSELF IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY

I.

Scholars to come! Orators, artists,
musicians to come!

Ph.D.s to come . . .

Come come come come come to the
card cat-a-log, yes, at the old U's lib-ray-ree
(&c)

come to the guide, scholars pale . . .
(&c)

II.

A. "Bayes and Minimax Procedures in
Sampling from Finite Populations."

B. "Bayes' Estimation of Proportions."

C. "A Bayes two-stage test
for the Mean, Some Proportions of."

D. "Bayesian Decision Problems."

E. "A Bayesian Indifference Procedure."

III.

All to-gether

—forward & back—& do-see-do.

Larry Neal Bowers

A LESSON IN ROMANCE

Joe Martin, you're an empty headed dullard
To stay in solitude the whole day long.
You've proved yourself to be a yellow coward,
Afraid that your approach will be all wrong.
Remember, "Nothing ventured, nothing . . ." you know,
So why should I be quoting you old saws?
You've saws enough to stretch to San Francisco,
Or wear out twenty pairs of muscled jaws—
Like "Look before you leap!" (a lot of garbage)
And "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."—
Dead maxims that your aunt in palsied old age
Fanned rivet hot and pounded in your head.
Not being cautious got me my wife Lynn.
(Joe Martin couldn't hide a growing grin.)

Mary Crow

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

The girls that grow up with deep eyes
know nothing.
Look! How everything in their lives
circles around that far-off wedding day!
Waiting for the glory box to be filled,
waiting for that great day,
they hope that the hope chest
will be full of the right things.
Flesh masquerading as spirit,
they live
without inhabiting themselves,
dreaming of future glory,
the bliss of heaven.
Neophytes approaching the altar,
they imagine peace and piety,
and never dream
sweet fruits will grow bitter,
fall down at night,
and spoil.

IT IS THE TIME WE WANT MOST TO BE DONE WITH
AND THE ONE WE BEG TO RETURN TO—

It is running naked through the sprinkler
When the heat forms diamonds on your upper lip
and makes little wet curls at the back of your neck—
And not being called indecent.

It is looking at the ocean and while leaping
between the lips of waves gliding in to tease you,
asking if they roll away from the feet of children in Spain—
and not having to believe they don't.

It is wearing a satin ribbon to hold back your bangs
then crossing your skeletal legs to show
the crisp new ruffles of crinolin under your
Sunday dress on Easter morning—
and not being told you are sacreligious.

It is the only time we can see
hear
and feel. . . .

It is the time we want most to be done with—
and the one we beg to return to.

Jane Merchant

FIVE HAIKU FOR SPRING

The first daffodil—
Will there be choked black springs when
The first shall be last?

Golden asterisks,
Dandelions represent
Unprintable words.

Glancing out—purple
Hints on the lilac appear
Since one glance ago.

Apple blossoms fall
Into tulip chalices,
Softly, oh, softly.

Peony fragrance
In the air all day. Breathing—
Sacred privilege!

ms. 472000

274-0955

Horn

